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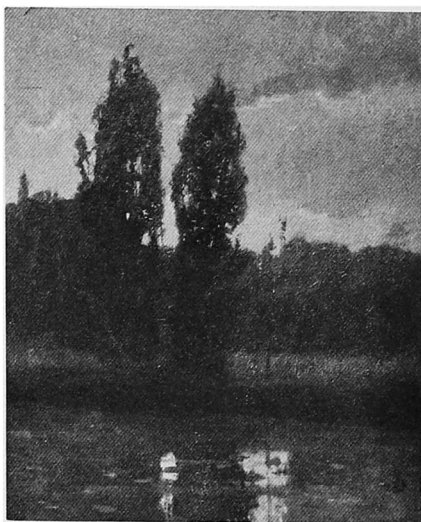
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LANDSCAPE, BY EDWARD M. CAMPBELL  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

## THE FOURTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF THE SOCIETY OF WESTERN ARTISTS



PANDORA, BY C. P. DAVIS  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

If we watch the development of a nation's commercial prosperity, we learn that it is commensurate to the growth of its artistic instincts. History repeats itself, we are told, and therefore it should be of some interest to a people to know what is being done in the world of art of its own country.

The area covered by the United States is so vast that we have instinctively divided it into an Eastern and a Western country.

The disadvantages under which the Western division has labored in its artistic development are too obvious to need mentioning, and it is to overcome in part the advantages which the East offers over the West that the Society of Western Artists has been developed.

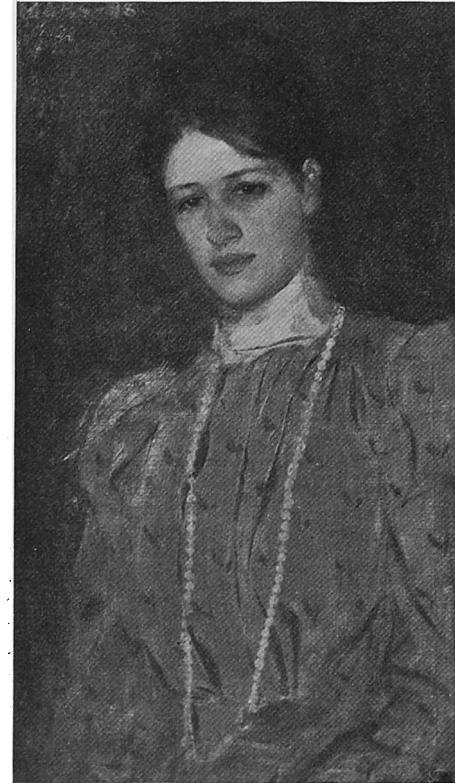
Certainly all broad-minded people must recognize the claim

which this movement has on their passing attention. It should lay claim to this attention from the fact that it is not only an organization to help the artists thus banded together, but to offer the people of the West an opportunity of cultivating a desire, and even a taste, in mat-

ters of art. It can merit the encouragement of a people only in so far as it meets with their respect and approval.

Every step since the organization of the Society of Western Artists, four years ago, has been a progressive one. Just as a child needs humoring and coaxing to bring out its strength of individuality, so this young organization has been petted and shielded to increase its strength and usefulness.

There is no doubt that there have been many works in the previous exhibitions of the society which merited too justly the adverse opinions of the critics. But many of the harmless pranks of a growing child must be silently passed by, in the hope that encouragement and good example will develop undreamed-of characteristics. Nothing will so effectually destroy the progress of development as harsh-



PORTRAIT OF MISS S., BY ETHEL MARS  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

ness and severity in the beginning. The Society of Western Artists feels that it has passed beyond its first youth, and that it can afford to take upon itself a more critical and dignified attitude.

In the present, its fourth annual exhibition, it has shown evidence of this higher standard. One cannot say that it is absolutely without fault. It still needs weeding and pruning. What collection, brought

together by a body of men of such divergent individualities as most artists have, can be made perfect? Given a great number of works for a very small exhibition, it is *perhaps* possible to collect a fine high-standard lot of works in the ordinary manner of jury selection. But even under these circumstances the thing is rarely done. There are questionable works in our very best exhibitions. So there is no need for an apology for the weaker things in this exhibition, and there is every reason to congratulate the society on the smallness of the num-

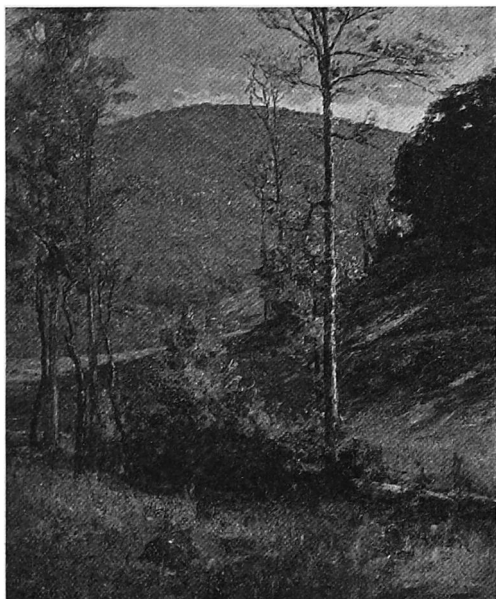


EARLY MOONRISE, BY L. H. MEAKIN  
CINCINNATI, OHIO

ber of questionable works. There are more good things and decidedly fewer bad things this year, and the judgment should be that the infant is in a promising and progressive condition.

In considering the society as a whole, we should not forget that the difficulties it constantly meets with are not few or far between. It has to draw on a very widely scattered community for the material which makes up its collection, and that it is dependent not on the adverse criticism of only one, but of six distinctly typical sets of people. The men who contribute the work are not a collective body of united artists, but are scattered far and wide over the country, having

no other knowledge of each other or of each other's works than they gain from seeing this collection once a year. A fixed standard is impossible. Each must be judged on his or her own individual merits; and when one considers this fact, and joins to it the widely



LANDSCAPE, BY T. C. STEELE  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

differing trainings and inclinations of the jury of selection, the task of getting up such an exhibition becomes a difficult one, and we are again led to congratulate the society on its manifest improvement.

The observation that landscapes predominate in this exhibition is one that applies with equal force to any exhibition of American paintings. The tendencies of the American school, if there can be said to be such a school, is certainly in the direction of landscape painting. What the reason of this is it is not so easy to explain. It

may lie in the fact that the men, being isolated for the greater part, and away from all influences except that of nature as manifested in landscape, naturally take up the interpretation of that which is nearest to them. It may also be explained in the fact that our painters do not have the long, constant, and severe academic training which the genre or portrait painter seems to require in his development. Be this as it may, certainly landscapes predominate in any exhibition of American work. In a sense this may even apply to other than American exhibitions.

When we have given us the wide range between the conception of the luminous atmospheric tones of the Indianapolis contingent, and the more sober, solid, and sentimental painting of Cincinnati and Detroit, we ought not to complain even of this predominance of land-

scapes. There is tone, composition, and color to please any one, in water-color, pastel, or in oil. There are figures, portraits, and genre paintings; a few plasters, one marble, and a charming silver repoussé. We miss in the collection this year the work of the Rookwood people, and excuse it from the fact that they have sent all available material to the Paris exposition of 1900. It is strongly to be hoped that in the not too distant future our home exhibitions will be of such importance and benefit that such an excuse as the above will not be valid. So long as we, or other foreign schools, contribute to the Parisian exhibitions, just so long will this delusion of the strength of the French school continue. And when this mistake has been rectified, our students will in all probability study at home, and we will have a truly national school of art.

If it develops in the same lines as are indicated in some of the work shown in this exhibition, we will be thankful when that time of emancipation arrives.

There is a unity of conception, color, and execution in the works of Mr. Steele which makes his pictures more pleasing than ever. There is a decided change in his composition, which lends to his work a grandeur which it did not always have before. Mr. Adams, too, is fresher in color than ever, and Mr. Forsyth follows his usual rule of showing us his dexterity in two media, oil and water-color. How strongly contrasted to this group of men is the work of Mr. Meakin—just as individual, just as strong, and having the same poetic feeling for nature, but in a more subdued, somber key. They choose the brightness and gladness of sunshine, he the glowing, rich promise of a day to come. Mr. Browne's work is more *intense* than that shown us last year, when we were taken to the picturesque but dreary dryness of New Mexico. His twilight is particularly fine in its breadth and simplicity of treatment. The same applies to a very truthful rendering of twilight by E. M. Campbell. The softness and brilliancy of the afterglow are splendidly conceived.



MY NEWSBOY, BY C. G. WALDECK  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Curious are the little pastel drawings by Mr. Kaelin. They are entirely his own, and will make a place for themselves some day, which, as the new lithography so much talked of abroad, will open a new field for reproduction. They are so simple and direct that one is led to the conclusion at a first glance that they *are* reproductions.

Mr. Ben Brown sends us some fine, rich little things from California. The one of the mountains is perhaps not so poetic as that of the rush-grown pool, but it is characteristic of the effect of light seen in these Southern countries.

Messrs. Sharp and Burbank grow stronger in their convictions regarding our red brethren. It is a pity, though, that they do not send us something more important than the fine portrait studies they are making. In this respect we miss the work of Mr. Farny.

A new member has appeared in Mr. Ralph Clarkson, whom we have just reason to welcome into our society. His contributions show a strong sense of modeling and harmony of color in rather a low key. There is dignity and character in the portrait, and breadth and solidity in the study which it is a pleasure to observe. It seems a pity that we cannot get more of the class of work which Mr. Davis submits in his charming little medallion of "Pandora." We need that sort of thing to help us and our public. Its application to



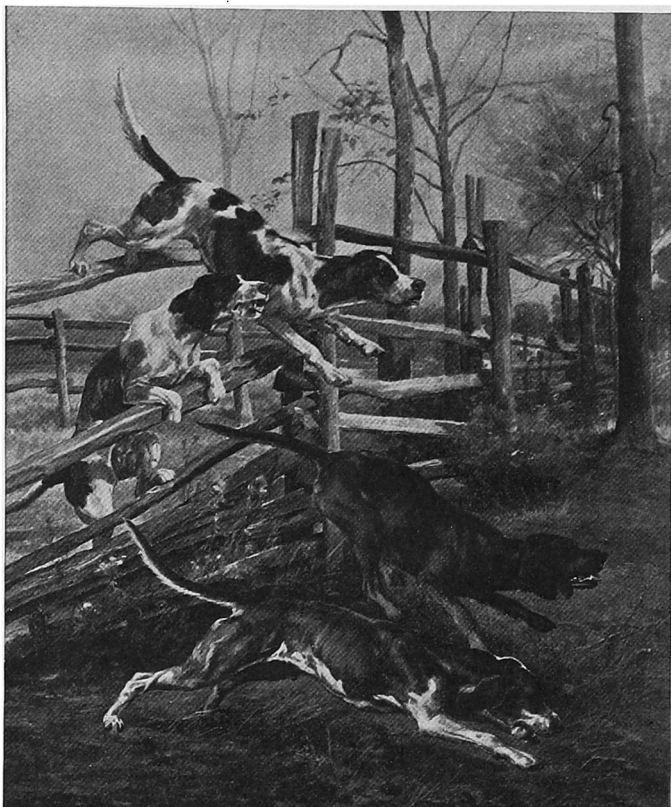
EMILY, BY LEONARD CRUNELLE  
DECATUR, ILLINOIS

the art industries of our country is a crying need, and it is sincerely to be hoped that others working in this line will feel encouraged to contribute examples in the future.

Miss Dohn and Miss Mar have sufficiently demonstrated the value of their membership in the society by their charming tones and easy drawing. We have plasters by Mr. Taft which should call forth commendation even from the uninitiated, since they are portraits of well-known men. Mr. Bringhurst sends us the sketch for a group which has been executed, life-size, for the vestibule of some musicians' studios in St. Louis. There are some attractive studies of children in plaster by Mr. Crunelle and by Miss Longman. Miss Cotter

contributes a study in marble and a painting, both of no mean merit.

It is tedious reading, and only an endless repetition of conventional phrases to run through the list of over one hundred works con-



THE LEADERS, BY EDMUND H. OSTHAUS  
TOLEDO, OHIO

tributed to this collection. The works must, at all events, speak for themselves, and it is to be hoped that they will speak to an understanding and a sympathetic public. It is certainly the aim of the members of the Society of Western Artists to appeal to the gentler feelings of the public as well as to strengthen themselves in united endeavors.

EDMUND H. WUERPEL.